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ABSTRACT

An analysis of the textbooks of five leading Midwest publishers revealed that (1) no safety measures were to be found in the regular basal reading textbooks; (2) safety was always treated as an extra, supplementary issue; (3) the opportunity to easily insert safety messages into regular texts and illustrations was overlooked; (4) the highly imaginative stories found in these books appealed to a child's use of imagination, but also reinforced the idea that risk and speed are magical; and (5) the illustrations in these textbooks were a prime resource that should be used to subtly suggest safety messages, but remain untapped. Safety behaviors can be learned only if children are provided with a concrete opportunity for genuine learning, not lectures. The traditional approach to safety has been ineffectual since safety has been taught in a supplementary fashion. It has been dutifully lectured at children, and children daily view crash scenes on television and in their books in which no one ever gets hurt. Consistent with the belief that behaviors are formed at an early age, the Accident Prevention Program of Chicago has addressed and been actively involved in providing effective legislation and media programs to the community to prevent disabling accidents. Their efforts thus far have included public service announcements, the insertion of safety messages into children's television programing, community workshops, safety conferences, information resources for schools, and support to legislative efforts consistent with their goals. (HOD)

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STATEMENT OF GOALS AND PURPOSES:

EARLIEST LEARNING MATERIALS AND SAFETY EDUCATION

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Accident Prevention/Chicago
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
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Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago

345 East Superior Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611 (312) 649-6000 Writer's direct dial number (312)649-6017

July 10, 1981

To Whom It May Concern:

The Earliest Learning Materials project of RIC's Accident Prevention Program has my strongest support. After reading through the attached statement I can state that this type of project is getting to the essence of a very real public health problem in this country: death and permanent injury resulting from preventable accidents. As a physician and the medical director of this Institute, I have seen first-hand the tragic results of careless behavior, too widely accepted.

Since we know that behaviors are begun at a very early age, this project seeks as its long-range goal to have a part in shaping attitudes on safety and self. You and your creative staffs are being asked to participate in this important project. While the results will not be seen immediately, what will in fact be accomplished through our mutual efforts is a real change in the attitudes of Americans as they grow up regarding risk-taking behavior. I am hoping that in twenty years this hospital is only half as filled as it is today.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Henry B. Betts, M.D.
Medical Director
Executive Vice President
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago

HBB/tb

A Member of The McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University

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July 15, 1981

To Whom It May Concern;

Accidents and resulting disabilities are of great concern to those of us responsible for the care of children. We know that among children over age one, the most common cause of death and disability is the unexpected accident.

Today, there is a growing body of research which illustrates how training in safety and accident prevention can significantly reduce the probability that a child will experience a serious accident. Consequently, it behooves us to vigorously pursue such training through mass media and public education resources.

I endorse the current RIC effort to encourage school textbook authors and publishers to include both subtle and direct safety messages in standard academic materials. School experiences impact directly on childrens' everyday behavior, and safety is certainly a critical prerequisite to the continued development of the child's mind and body.

Thank you,

James Quinlan

James Quinlan, Ph. D.
Pediatric Psychologist
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago

JQ/tb

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BACKGOUND

Accidents are the third leading cause of death among all Americans and the leading cause of death among persons between 1 and 39 years old. More than one-hundred thousand Americans die of trauma each year. In addition, ten million trauma victims are disabled, including three hundred and eighty thousand left permanently impaired.[1.]

The Accident Prevention Program of Chicago's Rehabilitation Institute[2.] believes that the incredible numbers lost each year in this country to such trauma can only be significantly reduced when the behavior of Americans changes. This type of behavior must be taught, and then firmly reinforced at the same developmental stage as other basics in the growth of a child.

The correlation of young men, high-risk behavior, aggression and accidents has been the focus of recent behavioral studies. Notable among these has been the work of Donald C. Pelz, whose papers have been particularly concerned with the role of drinking in serious car accidents involving young

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1. Opeing statement on the toll of trauma, "White Paper," submitted to and approved by the American Trauma Society. Thomas K. Hunt, M.D., President. May, 1981.

2. See Appendix for a further amplification of the Accident Prevention/Chicago Program, begun at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago in September, 1978. This program is the only full-time one of its kind in the country.

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men under 25.[3] In the below cited study, Pelz states:

> ... lowest crash and violation rates were found for men who continued to avoid alcohol and remained low in antagonism. Compared to this base, crash rates were three times higher for young men who continued a strong antagonism and who started to drink. Compared to the base, violation rates were three times higher for young men who continued a strong antagonism and continued to drink.

High-risk behavior and its sometime tragic consequences are not exclusively the behavior of young men. This country has had a long-running fascination with chance, risk and the excitement associated with it. Proof of this is found throughout our culture, in our books and magazines, sporting events and films. While the positive aspects of this national attitude are obvious to the point of glamorization, the less than glamorous results of needless risks are rarely portrayed or openly discussed.

The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and other similar facilities deal daily with permanent disabilities resulting from this type of behavior. Statistics from the Institute indicate that 49% of its patients are there because of some type of trauma.[4] Of this group 21% have been injured in a vehicular accident; 29% are between the ages of 15 and 29; and another 19% are between the ages of 30 and 39.

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3. Donald C. Pelz, Ph. D., Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. "Effects of Drinking, Hostility, and Alienation on Driving of Young Men," 1973; and "Drinking-Driving Behavior of Young Men in Relation to Accidents," 1975.

4. REHABIS, or Rehabilitation Information System, Department of Research, Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Based on figures from 1979-80 admission data.

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It is this information that has guided us to the theory that we must actively shape attitudes on safety and self between the ages of four and eight, or Pre-School through Third Grade. This is our target audience. In order to truly affect their behavior fifteen years hence, we must become involved in those several stages of development which this time frame encompasses, most importantly the child's growth towards concrete thinking. It is with this foundation then, that we started research on this project in 1980, and feel capable of making definitive suggestions to textbook publishers and childrens' programmers in 1981.

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II YEAR-LONG RESEARCH

Research for the textbook project was begun in the spring of 1980. Chicago-area curriculum libraries provided an initial overiew of the current market in textbooks. Based on this groundwork, the project was defined by a number of decisions:

* The target audience was to be four through eight year-olds.
* The focus of this project would be Reading texts and related childrens' programming.
* It was essential that available offerings be reviewed thoroughly before any claims or suggestions could be made.

A number of pivotal questions were raised. Who were the largest textbook publishers in the Midwest? Where were they located? What school systems patronized them? What textbook publisher affected the greatest number of children?

Meetings were held with representatives of the following school systems over the summer:

* Chicago Public School System: 315,670 students, K-8.
* Archdiocese of Chicago: 128,416 students, K-8.
* District 97, Oak Park, IL : 4,940 students, K-8.

It was felt that these school systems would give this project the broadest sampling.

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Also contacted in the initial stages were the American Library Association, the Chicago Public Library, The Juvenile Division of Random House Publishers and Scholastic Magazine.

Curriculum libraries at Chicago area colleges/universities provided an initial sampling of the current textbook offerings. Based on these samplings and discussions with the above sources, it was decided to focus on the five major textbook publishers:

* Ginn and Company, Lexington, Maine.
* Scott, Foresman, Glenview, IL.
* Science Research Assoicates (SRA), Chicago, IL.
* Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Chicago, IL.
* Harcourt, Brace, Niles, IL.

A final stage of research began with each publisher donating a set of their primary level readers to the Accident Prevention Program. The AP Program is prepared to make a separate presentation to each of the targeted publishers.

This early research confirmed some basic theories:

* There are no safety messages to be found in the regular reading textbooks and their corresponding materials for this age level.
* Safety is always treated as an extra, supplementary issue. It is eliminated altogether when classroom time is at a premium, and sometimes never reaches a school where extras are missing due to lack of funds.

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* The opportunity to easily insert safety messages into regular texts and illustrations is overlooked. There are countless illustrations in which cars are shown without seatbelts, people go jumping into unknown waters, etc. All without being hurt.
* The highly imaginative stories found in these books appeal to a child's use of imagination, but also reinforce the idea that risk and speed are magical. In contrast, safe behavior appears dull.
* The illustrations in these textbooks are a prime resource which should be used to subtly suggest these messages, but remain untapped. The young child in particular must be fascinated by these pages.

Proof of this project's basic argument was received in a shipment of books from one of the targeted textbook publishers. Among the First-Grade primers was a paperback in which fantasy characters flew through the air in a magic convertible. The young reader would learn as they read on that the convertible was magic because it went FAST FAST FAST. This incredible, seatbeltless craft finally crashed in a pond. No one was hurt. Our six year old reader grows into a sixteen year old driver in ten short years after reading stories which tell them it is okay, even magic, to go FAST FAST FAST. This young adult more often than not is still fascinated with the magic of speed. More importantly, they still believe that they won't get hurt. Unfortunately they are wrong, only it is nearly impossible to tell this to a sixteen or eighteen year old. At age six, however, it is all of our responsiblility to tell them that speed is NOT magic.

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On the positive side, research also found that children's author Richard Scarry has already begun to insert simple safety messages into his highly successful pre-school level books.[5] When "Dolly" goes flying out of the car and hurts herself it is pointed out that she hasn't worn her seatbelt. It is hoped that the same child who reads such messages in Richard Scarry will go on to find it reinforced in school reading texts, and again in children's television programming they see when they go home.

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5. Copyright © 1973 by Richard Scarry, Illustrations from Please and Thank You, Published by Random House, Inc. All rights reserved.

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III FINDINGS

It is the firm belief of this program that safety behaviors can only be learned if children are provided with a concrete opportunity for genuine learning,[6] not lectures. The traditional approach thus far has been ineffectual due to a clear failure in three areas:

1. Safety has been taught in a supplementary fashion, a Friday afternoon extra or sometime issue. Instead there should be an integral approach, in which characters getting into their fantasymobile also buckle their seatbelts. Attractive illustrations must reinforce the verbal and written messages if these basic safety concepts are to make a real impression on the developing child. Both children's TV and publishers have tremendous resources to make these messages strong.
2. Safety has been dutifully lectured at children. Children should be given the opportunity to actively make the connection that safety is a smart mode of behavior. Partly because they learn the concept so passively, the concept remains dull and vague. It will become something tangible, more easily understood, if they encounter it through learning activities, creative stories and TV shows which involve them.

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6. A basic concept of child psychologist Jean Piaget's theory of intellectual development.

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3. Children daily view crash scenes on TV and in their books in which no one EVER gets hurt. If risk is portrayed as glamorous and exciting, then a balance should be achieved in which safer behavior is portrayed as attractive and appealing.

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IV INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

1. WHAT I CAN DO BY MYSELF: Beginning with the age of four the child begins insisting that "I'm a big girl/boy now," demonstrating to the world at large that they can do things by themselves. They are able to prove this with increased confidence as they meet with success. By age eight there are any number of things of which they have proven themselves capable, and we want to appeal to this:

    a) I can buckle my seatbelt (CLICK).

    b) I can help my little brother or sister buckle their seatbelt or child passenger restraint device.

    c) I will ask before entering an unknown environment, diving into unknown waters or going out into the streets to play.

    d) I know what the safe way to the playground is (CHILD GETS TO VERBALIZE KNOWLEDGE) or the safe way home.

2. GOOD BEHAVIOR IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO BODY AWARENESS, SELF-RESPECT:

    a) The child recognizes that they should take care of their body in other ways such as eating right, brushing their teeth, etc., and that the next step is to always wear a seatbelt.

    b) The child recognizes WHY they should buckle their seatbelt: because they like themselves.

    c) The child can explain WHY it is <u>silly</u> not to wear your seatbelt.

    d) The child should see a sequence in which a character does not obey safety rules, gets up and says "Boy, was I ever dumb!" <u>Everyone</u> knows you should always buckle up!" The goal is to help them connect this relationship.

3. THE CHILD'S SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT: "Go Belt Someone Today!" This is a slogan taken from a public service announcement of the same name. Children are encouraged to belt up everyone they include in their sphere:

    a) Belt your Mother (because you love her)

    b) Belt your Father (" ")

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c) Belt your brother, sister, etc.

d) Children can be asked to name the people they love, and then make the correlation that these are also the people they should seatbelt.

4. THE CHILDREN SHOULD BE ABLE TO LABEL/IDENTIFY "GOOD" AND "BAD" SAFETY BEHAVIOR.

a) The children can be asked to solve a problem: ask them to decide in their heads what is good and bad behavior.

b) Now ask them to tell you, the teacher (VERBALIZE CONCEPTS).

c) Ask each of them to tell the class a story in which the boy or girl is acting in line with safe behavior.

PMB/tb
9/81.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION/CHICAGO

Begun in September, 1978, as the result of a city-wide conference titeled "Youth and Driving, the Road to Death," ACCIDENT PREVENTION/CHICAGO was initially designed to impact on teenage driving accidents. It has been expanded to include other causes of disabling accidents in the young; diving and handgun mishaps are two examples.

The program is directed by RIC staff member Mary Beth Berkoff, and has had invaluable input from an Advisory Council and Steering Committee of educators, business people, health care professionals, and representatives of Chicago government, law enforcement and media.

The ACCIDENT PREVENTION/CHICAGO program has two phases; one phase is immediate and media oriented; the other, long-range and educational. As part of the first, the program was instrumental in effecting legislation to raise the drinking age in Illinois from 18 to 21. Research studies show that when the drinking age was lowered to 18 from 21, the number of teenage driving accidents soared. Accordingly, we believe that a staunch stand in support of legislation to reverse the move was appropriate. To this end, a videotape was sent to the Illinois Legislature dramatically showing the disabilities and difficulties of four, young former RIC patients who were disabled by alcohol related accidents. Subsequently, Dr. Henry Betts, the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago's Executive Vice President and Medical Director, testified in Springfield in favor of this legislation. He also held a press conference covereed by state and national media representatives. The media reacted most favorably to an institution of RIC's stature taking a stand on such an issue. Follow-up mailgrams were sent to senators, the governor, and other interest groups throughout the state.

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Currently we have been active in both the national and state initiatives to tighten DWI (driving while intoxicated) legislation. Because we see the tragic results of this type of behavior, our efforts to strengthen laws are very credible.

RIC has made use of visual and other media techniques to further our goals. We have been assisted by the creative staff of Foote, Cone and Belding to produce PSA (Public Service Advertising) spots aimed at young children to encourage the use of seatbelts.

Early in 1980, through funding provided by the Illinois Department of Transportation, two 30 second and one 10 second ads were produced and distributed nationwide. Because of their quality and because they fill a void in the PSA offering, these spots, titled "Belt Someone" have received incredibly widespread airing.

Most recently, a new series of commercials has been produced for us by Foote, Cone and Belding and again funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation. These ads, called "The Cure" are designed to convince adults that to protect their children adequately in cars, they must put them in seatbelts. This idea is also being expanded to extend the campaign into other media areas.

It is important to influence children's behavior to encourage them to begin safe behaviors at an early age. In regard to this long range educational phase of our program we have approached television programmers both here and in New York, requesting them to include coherent, consistent safety messages into basic children's programming. For example, we have encouraged them to show people buckling up when getting into a car, checking the depth before they dive into unknown waters, wearing adequate protection when involved in sports or riding a motorcycle. We believe that positive role modeling in this most influential format will augment our other educational endeavors.

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Consistent with the belief that behaviors are formed at an early age, the ACCIDENT PREVENTION program has addressed and been actively involved in providing adequate child passenger protection. This activity resulted in our organizing a workshop and giving public testimony at a Child Passenger Protection Conference sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in December, 1979. We addressed the needs for media support of our efforts, both by including positive safety messages into their programming and by eliminating unsafe messages from their existing shows. Dr. Henry Betts, Medical Director of the Rehabilitaiton Institute of Chicago, spoke of the need for physicians to rally behind such causes and when necessary to become politically active in favor of legislation which would help prevent disabilities.

At the present time, in fact, we are engaged most actively in this type of legislation. Following a child passenger safety conference here at the Institute, the Illinois Child Passenger Safety Association was formed to educate the people of Illinois about the importance of restraining small children in cars. Building on the experience of Tennessee, where the first child passenger law was passed in 1978; where child restraint usage has tripled; and fatalities of children under the age of five in cars have been cut in half, we are attempting to see that this type of law is passed in Illinois.

Using the resources of this office, this Institution, in fact the whole Medical Center, we have been able to provide a unique service to the entire community. By supplying information to the media, to the schools, and lending our support to legislative efforts consistent with our goals we are attempting to prevent the types of disabling accidents we treat.

One of our most visible (and audible) areas of endearvor, is our five 60-second radio public service announcement series produced by CBS Radio Network. The series was designed to encourage safety in driving over the Labor

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Day Weekend, and throughout the year. The tapes, produced locally and aired nationally, incorporated testimonials from five former RIC patients all talking about the events leading up to their accident and the resulting physical disabilities. This was not done as a "scare" technique, but rather to deeply impress the general public with how dramatically ones life changes in one, brief, irretrievable moment. This series was made in cooperation with the National Safety Council which provided us with fatality and serious injury statistics. The tapes were given cross country attention, not only on the radio but on network and local televsision news shows and in newspapers everywhere. It is our plan that a series of radio spots will be aired each major holiday period.

We are also addressing disabilities resulting from diving accidents and handgun mishaps. In addition to helping with public information on stories on diving accidents, diving safety is being promoted by a poster nicknamed "Mr. Clunk." This poster has been distributed by the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and the Midwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury Care System staff to the Chicago and Regional Transit Authorities, motel chains, YMCA, academic institutions and park districts. We are hoping that Mr. Clunk will be to hazardous actions what "Mr. Yuuk" has been to poisonous substances. With respect to handguns, we are a reference/resource center for the Committee for Handgun Control in the city, and for interested, responsible media people.

In a collaborative effort with RIC's Women's Board, a film entitled "Consequences: Spinal Cord Injury" has been desseminated to school groups throughout the Chicago area. This film was produced under the sponsorship

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of the Northwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center at the University of Washington. The film is used as a springboard for discussion about safety, and the notion that wheelchairs are "not just for grown-ups."

Similar to our approach with television programmers, we have been developing a strategy to encourage textbook manufacturers to include basic safety messages in their earliest learning materials. In order for them to be effective, we believe that safety messages must not be extra; they must be fully integrated into a person's education from the earliest years.

We see ACCIDENT PREVENTION/CHICAGO as a functioning and active resource for the community. It may be a model for other such programs in similar health care facilities. Our goals include a continuation, and expansion of ongoing projects and evaluation followed by possible entry into areas where our influence would cause change in our society.

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SERGEANT MURPHY'S SAFETY RULES

Here is an old friend—Sergeant Murphy. He has a few good rules everybody should learn . . . and obey.

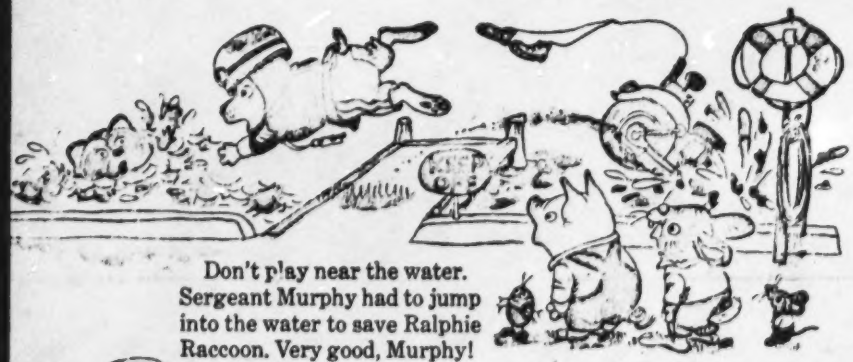
Never chase a ball into the road. You might be hit by a car. Ask an older person to get the ball for you.

Always fasten your seat belt in case the car stops suddenly. Little Sister's doll wasn't wearing a seat belt. Poor dolly!

Don't lean out of the window when you are riding in a car.

Cross the street at the cross walk when the light tells you that you should.

Don't run on crowded sidewalks. Don't push people either—even for fun. Someone may get hurt.



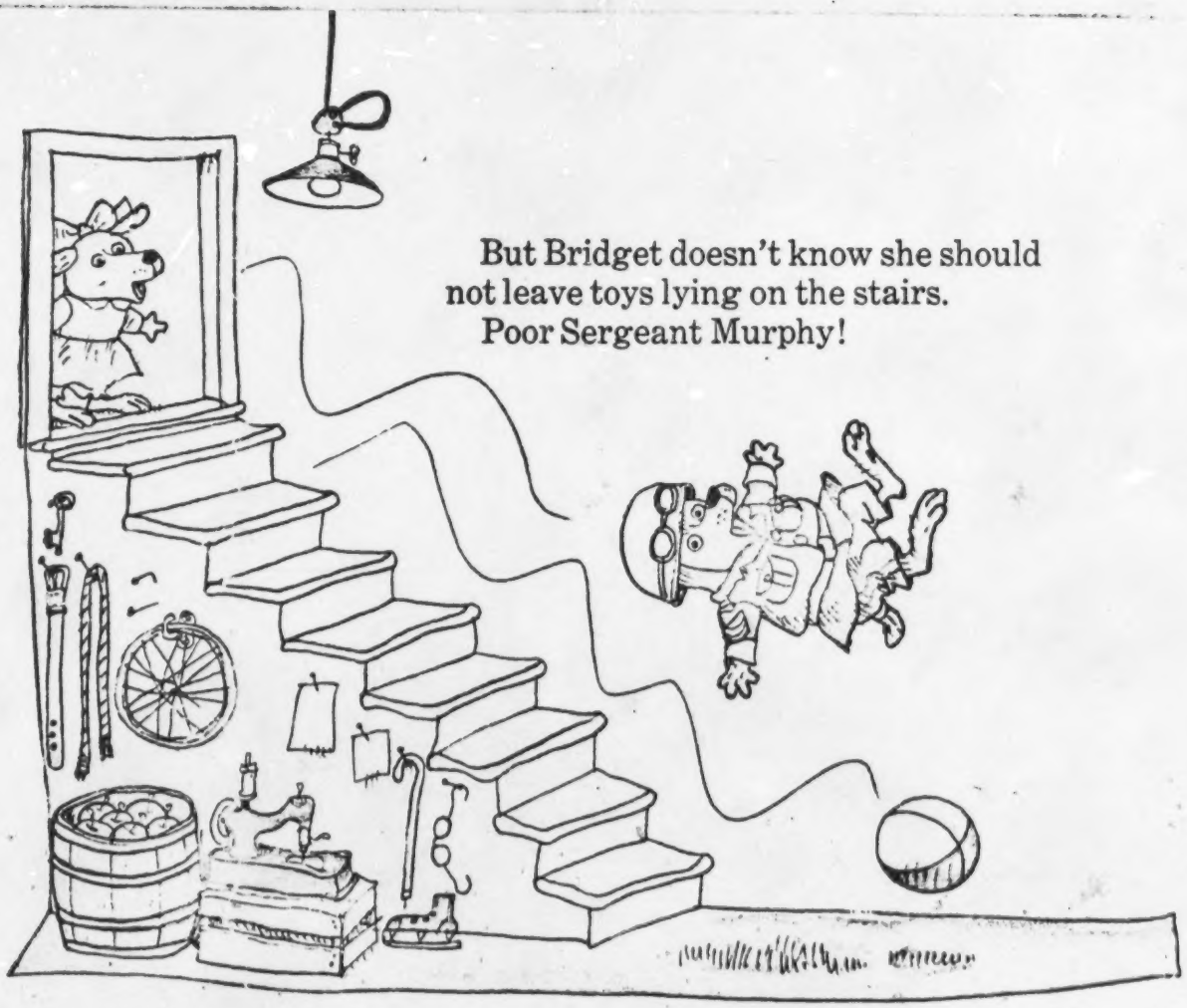
Don't play near the water. Sergeant Murphy had to jump into the water to save Ralphie Raccoon. Very good, Murphy!

Don't throw sticks or stones at people. You can hurt somebody that way.

Sergeant Murphy had to put a bandage on Walter's head. He bought him an ice cream cone, too. Wasn't that nice?

Never, never play with matches. Sergeant Murphy arrived just in time with that hose!

Sergeant Murphy tells his family to be careful at home, too. His little girl, Bridget, knows she should stay away from the hot stove when Mrs. Murphy is cooking.



But Bridget doesn't know she should not leave toys lying on the stairs. Poor Sergeant Murphy!

"I'm sorry, Daddy. I won't do it again."